

## Address to the People of Ukraine on Ukrainian Independence Day *August 24, 1994*

It's a privilege to speak directly to you, the Ukrainian people, and congratulate you on your third Independence Day.

In the short span of 3 years, Ukraine has shown the world that a nation can rapidly set down the roots of democracy. This year's elections for President and Parliament are strong evidence of your commitment to a democratic future, and we congratulate you on them.

As Vice President Gore told President Kuchma when he visited Kiev earlier this month, the United States places a high value on our relationship with Ukraine. The American people strongly support your country's independence, its sovereignty, its territorial integrity. We believe in a stable, strong, and prosperous Ukraine.

To help achieve those goals, the United States will support you as Ukraine proceeds down the difficult path of economic reform. At the recent meeting of the Group of Seven, I worked hard to secure a pledge of \$4 billion in assistance for your nation. Those funds will be put to work when your government takes practical steps to reform Ukraine's economy and introduce the free market. As you face the hard work of modernizing and rebuilding your economy, be assured that the United States stands ready to help.

The fruits of cooperation between our two nations can already be seen in our historic achievements on military and nuclear security matters. The leadership that Ukraine demonstrated when it became the first country to join NATO's Partnership For Peace is showing other nations the path to new security arrangements that will promote a truly unified Europe. Your nation's critical role in creating the trilateral statement on denuclearization will not only remove a source of great danger to you and people all over the world but also ensure that you receive fair compensation for the value of the nuclear warheads on your territory.

And I am confident that when Ukraine joins the 164 nations that have acceded to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, you will witness a range of new opportunities for your high-technology industries. These industries will have the chance to flourish in both government-to-government projects and through expanded international commerce.

Here in the United States, as you know, we are especially proud of the Ukrainian-Americans who have helped to build our democracy and contribute so much to our society. I join with them in today's celebration of Ukraine's reborn statehood and in recognition of Ukrainians the world over who have given so much for the cause of freedom and democracy.

The coming years pose many challenges, but I am confident that we are laying the foundation to meet them. Working together, I am convinced that my country and yours will continue to develop a deep and abiding relationship that serves our mutual interests. We look forward to working with your new President and Parliament to find new ways to strengthen the friendship between our peoples.

On this day, we should all recall those who fought for independence before us. Your great poet Taras Shevchenko, a man born into serfdom, a contemporary of my Nation's Great Emancipator, President Lincoln, dreamed that one day his countrymen would enjoy the fruits of independence. Today, on behalf of all the American people, I congratulate you on realizing Shevchenko's dream and on the great years of freedom that lie ahead for all of you.

NOTE: The address was videotaped on August 4 at approximately noon in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, and it was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 24. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.